Examination-related suicide cases by students and reforms in the Examination System

*495. SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR SAMBHAJIRAO SHINDE: SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the frequent incidents of suicides by students on the eve of or after examinations and after declaration of results;

(b) if so, Government's information about the number and details of examination-related suicide-deaths and attempts to suicide by students during last three years in Delhi and in the country; and

(c) the steps, if any, taken to reform the examination system in the country?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI S.R. BOMMAI): (a) to (c) The Government have come across occasional reports of suicide related to examinations. Details of such suicide deaths are not maintained by this Ministry. These incidents are related to a number of factors including individual personality, home environment, peer pressure and a situation in which career opportunities are very limited in relation to mounting number of aspirants and examinations being a major determinant of career path.

2. Implementation of the examination reforms is a continuous process. The functional steps envisaged in the National Policy on Education 1986 and reiterated in the Programme of Action 1992 incldue elimination of excessive elements of chance and subjectivity, de-emphasis of memorisation, continuous and comprehensive evaluation, improvement in conduct of examinaiton, introduction of semester system from Secondary stage and use of grades in place of marks.

Procurement of Wheat in Punjab and Haryana

*496. SHRI S.M. KRISHNA: Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state:

(a) the quantity of wheat procured by the mandis in Punjab and Haryana during the last two years and that procured, so far during current Rabi Season;

(b) whether it is a fact that the farmers of Punjab have started blockade and boycott of grain markets in protest against lower procurement prices of wheat, if so, the extent of loss incurred so far;

(c) when was the price revised last time; and

(d) whether Government propose to increase the price in the near future, if so, by when?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a) Quantities of wheat procured in Punjab and Haryana during the last two Rabi Marketing Seasons and during the current marketing season are as under:—

(in lakh tonnes)

Marketing Season	Punjab	Haryana
1995-96	72.99	31.02
1996-97	56.28	20.60
1997-98 (as on 7.5.97)	26.17	10.31

(b) Yes, sir. The Bhartiya Kisan Union had launched an agitation demanding a higher price for the wheat to be sold to the government agencies. The agitation was withdrawn on 28.4.97. There was no direct financial loss incurred by the Government procuring agencies on account of the farmers' agitation except slowing down of the procurement during the period of agitation.

(c) and (d) Minimum Support Price of wheat is revised every year before the commencement of Rabi Marketing Season. For the current Rabi marketing Season 1997-98, the MSP announced is Rs.415/- per quintal. In addition, the farmers will be paid a Central Bounus of Rs.60/- per quintal for selling wheat to public procuring agencies during the period from 17.3.1997 to 10.6.1997.

Reforms in Examination System

*497. DR. B.B. DUTTA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that our examination system causes anxiety and stress in children by emphasizing rote learning instead of understanding;

(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereto;

(c) whether Government propose to bring about reforms in the examination system; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI S.R. BOMMAI): (a) to (d) There are a variety of examination system in vogue at differents stages of education in the country. The stress experienced by examinees is related to a number of factors including individual personality, home environment, peer pressure and a situation in which career opportunities are very limited in relation to mounting number of aspirants and examinations being a major determinant of career path.

2. Implementation of the examination reforms is a continuous process. The functional steps envisaged in the National Policy on Education 1986 and reiterated in the Programme of Action 1992 include elimination of excessive elements of chance and subjectivity, de-emphasis of memorisation, continuous and comprehensive evaluation, improvement in conduct of examination, introduction of semester system from Secondary stage and use of grades in place of marks.

Implementation of Scheme for Supplying Foodgrains at Half Price

*498. SHRI N. GIRI PRASAD:
SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA:

Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the scheme for supplying foodgrains at half-price to the people below poverty line has been implemented;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if the answer to part (a) be in the negative, the stand of the Government on this scheme and by when it is likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a to (c) A statement on the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) has been made in the Rajya Sabha on 24th February, 1997 and detailed guidelines issued in this regard have also been laid on the Table of the House. As per the guidelines, the State Governments/UT Administrations are required to identify the beneficiaries living below the poverty line, based on the provisional estimates arrived at by the Planning Commission adopting the methodology of "Expert Group on estimation of proportion and number of poor" constituted by the Planning Commission under the Chairmanship of Late Prof. Lakdawala. The State Governments/UT Administrations have accordingly been asked to identify the beneficiaries below the poverty line, issue special cards to them and make all necessary arrangements for delivery of foodgrains to the beneficiaries in a satisfactory and transparent manner. As soon as a State/UT completes this exercise, it can start deriving the benefits under the scheme. As per information received, Tripura and Haryana have already started